



Council 4 AFSCME Testimony Before the Children Committee  
February 21, 2013

My name is Brian Anderson. I am the legislative director for the 32,000 public and private employee members of Council 4 AFSCME, including Connecticut Red Cross workers.

**Council 4 opposes H.B. No. 6331 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING SIXTEEN-YEAR-OLD BLOOD DONORS.** We oppose this bill for moral and ethical reasons. We understand that the motive of many of the bill's supporters is good.

A Journal of American Medical Association article shows that there is a serious rise in the level of blood donation problems with sixteen-year-olds. This is because sixteen-year-olds are often physically immature. We have submitted that report with the testimony of AFSCME Local 3145 President Nancy Newton.

Another reason that we oppose this is because of the irresponsible behavior of the American Red Cross that puts public safety at risk. I have submitted various documents showing this.

The American Red Cross continues to operate under a 20-year continuing consent decree for mismanaging the blood supply. The American Red Cross management has been fined \$46 million by the federal Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for continuing mismanagement of the blood supply. The last fine of \$12 million was assessed in January of 2012.

It would appear that Red Cross management views these fines as a cost of doing business, rather than cleaning up their act. The blood revenue stream is over \$2 billion annually.

President George W. Bush's FDA threatened criminal sanctions against the American Red Cross board of directors for its continuing mismanagement of the blood supply. This is a highly unusual occurrence and shows a profound level of intransigence on the part of Red Cross management.

The American Red Cross has been a major labor law violator. Someone may like or dislike labor unions, but should follow the law. Consistently violating a body of law shows contempt for society.

For 100 years, nurses have been employed at blood drives. It is just over the last four or five years that the Connecticut Red Cross management has eliminated almost all nurses at

-MORE-

blood drives. This has been done in order to reduce costs, but puts public safety at risk.

The Connecticut Red Cross management pays workers to set up blood drives on commission. Senator DeFronzo (New Britain) testified before the Public Health Committee that this should be outlawed. It puts undue pressure on employees and makes safety a secondary concern.

I am holding a copy of a flier produced by the Connecticut Red Cross management. It advertises a "Build Your Own Bloody Mary and Blood Drive" in Rhode Island. When I first saw this I thought it was a page from the Onion satirical newspaper or a Saturday Night Live skit. It is an understatement to say that this is grossly irresponsible behavior on the part of Red Cross management. Can we trust such managers with the responsibility of taking blood from sixteen-year-olds?

The Red Cross management's behavior that I have described is shocking. Unfortunately, it is painfully consistent. The Red Cross brand and name have stayed strong, despite irresponsible management, because of the excellent work of the Red Cross employees.

I have submitted documentation of all facts that I have cited. I would be happy to answer any questions or provide further information.